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THE WAY

TO

UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE.

BY A

TYNE CHARTIST.

Newcastle-upon-Tyne:
PRINTED AT THE NORTHERN LIBERATOR OFFICE, 89, SIDE,
BY JOHN BELL.

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TO THE

Members of the General Convention.

As men upon whose integrity, firmness, and discernment in a great measure depends the issue of

——— "The noblest cause that men or sword
"Of mortal ever lost or gained."

As Representatives of the People—of living soul and not dead matter—the following tract is respectfully dedicated to you by

A TYNE CHARTIST.

1-30-57 [illegible]

PREFACE.

There is little new in the following sheets—usefulness, not originality, was aimed at. The facts are matter of history, the reasonings have, most of them, been reasoned a thousand times over. The plan for a general and efficient organization is chiefly made up of borrowed materials, and yet I do not hesitate to say that if proper use be made of this fourpenny pamphlet, it will be found of more practical value than any fourpence worth that ever issued from the Press.

THE

WAY TO UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE,

&c., &c.

If I succeed in making this Treatise, what it professes to be, I shall have done a service to mankind that may not easily be estimated. If I fail, it will be only a little labour thrown away, the price of which will, in all likelihood, come out of my own pocket.

The question at issue between the people and the aristocracy is a mighty question, involving a total change in the conditions of each, and not of themselves alone, but of their posterity; the prize they contend for is a mighty prize, being no less than the natural, mechanical, and intellectual resources of these islands. The forces arrayed on either side are mighty forces, being, on the one side, the headlong, physical, and mental energy of the people—undisciplined and disjointed energy, it is true, like unto a thousand distinct streams, all or most of which require to come together before they can bear down the barrier which oppose their progress. On the other side, the power, though small, is compact, concentrated, capable of being wielded with ease, and directed upon any given point at the shortest notice.

It would be unwise and dangerous for the people to underrate the physical and mental—not moral—power that is arrayed against them; there is no failing in a General more dangerous than a disposition to make light of the enemy's power; the prudent commander, whilst he calculates on a certain victory, will take every means within his reach to secure it.

Whether the present Movement succeed or fail is entirely in the hands of the people—perhaps, I should say, of their advisers. They have ample means at their disposal to secure success—perhaps not without a physical effort—that will depend much on circumstances—but with or without physical appliances they have the game in their own hands. If they lose it, themselves only shall be to blame.

The general opinion of the Convention—and perhaps still more of their constituents—seems to be that the question must be immediately decided—that the people have waited too long already, that they have too long drank the bitter cup, and eat the scanty morsel of slavery, and that it is at once unfair and unfeeling to ask them to continue to do so much longer.

Now, provided it can be shown that we could, without a disproportionate sacrifice, at once release the people from their present state of degradation and suffering, this ought to be done without loss of time; but there are two words to the bargain, the "powers that be" are *in the way*, and must be taken into account, as well as the urgent and bitter necessities of the people. There is even a possibility of failure, and both failure and sacrifice ought to be guarded against as far as human wisdom is capable of guarding against them. A revolution, such as has become necessary, and now inevitable, in England, is by no means so easy of accomplishment as many seem to suppose; the two French Revolutions arrayed on their side the vast majority, almost the whole of the middle classes, and even the Elected Representatives of the kingdom. The Americans, in their gallant struggle for Independence would hardly have succeeded, had it not been for the aid of French troops, and in America every class was arranged against the oppressor. In the Irish Rebellion of 1798, hardly ten thousand men in Ireland were outside of the patriotic confederacy—the Insurgents were formidably armed, not destitue of discipline, they numbered among their leaders some of the bravest and most influential of the Aristocracy, whilst the Militias, almost to a man, and many of the regular Regiments were ripe for revolt, the middle classes were almost all embarked in it, France lent the aid of her Republican right arm, and yet this combination failed and plunged Ireland into misery more intense, and slavery more degrading than perhaps she had ever before endured. With these facts before us, we ought not to faulter, to be sure, but we ought to be cautious, as men profiting by experience.

It is true the higher and middle classes have lost much of that power and influence which formerly belonged to them. It is true, the time has gone by when the mental and physical energies of the people were wielded by them alone, but that time has not long gone by. A remnant, variously estimated, of that influence still remains in their hands—that remnant of influence, together with the strength of their right arms, belongs legitimately

to the people, but at present both are arrayed on the side of the oppressor. If this matter were set right—if the middle classes rose to make common cause against the common tyrant, there would hardly be any "trial by combat," and if there should, the result would not be doubtful.

The middle classes must be brought to a sense of their duty, at least all means must be tried to bring them to it—this is part, and a most important part, of the duty of the popular agitators.

I am aware it is a prevailing opinion that all attention paid to the middle classes, with a view to win them over to the cause of humanity and justice, is so much time and trouble thrown away. I am not of this opinion. I believe that no man would be inclined to support the present system, except from the impression that he *benefits* by its existence, and that he would *suffer* by a change. This impression, however paradoxical it may appear, is the secret of middle class opposition to the present movement; let the middle-classes be shown that they are sufferers by the existing system—that they are likely enough to be still greater sufferers—that they would gain immensely by the change—convince them of these things and their present opposition will change into the most hearty co-operation.

"Aye, but it will be a difficult task to convince them of these truths!" True, it will be difficult, and so is the formation of a railroad, or indeed any great undertaking, difficult perhaps in the ratio to its greatness and use—many things are difficult, few impossible. This question of conciliating the middle classes has given me much thought since the commencement of the present movement, and the following is the best project I could hit upon for effecting the purpose.

Let every large town in the kingdom, say fifty in number, issue an address to the middle classes. Let Newcastle print 50,000 copies of its own address, distribute 1,000 copies at home, and send 1,000 for distribution to each of the large towns. Let each of the other large towns perform the same duty, and return the compliment to Newcastle, having it so arranged that the different addresses may succeed each other every three or four days, as shall be deemed most effectual. These addresses, though breathing pretty nearly the same spirit, would be each different in style, impressed, as it were, with the genius of the several districts from which they emanated. These succeeding addresses repeated and again repeated, will produce

effect, if any thing can produce it. One random blow of the hammer will not mould the massy metal to the purpose of the workman, but a succession of properly directed blows will effect his object, and though an isolated address, a random occasional appeal, either from the press or the platform, will produce little effect; I am not satisfied but a succession of appeals—to their *self-interests* and SELF-PRESERVATION mark—would produce much effect on the middle-classes, perhaps all we could desire.

The following, I conceive, is the spirit that should run through those appeals, a spirit not the less powerful, because strictly in accordance with truth:—

Address of the Working Men of Newcastle-upon-Tyne to the Manufacturing, Trading, and Middle-Classes generally of the United Kingdom,

BROTHERS,

The Working Men of England earn about 12s. or 14s. per week, some earn twice that sum, others not more than half, the average is about what we have stated.

With this pittance we are compelled, by the Government, to purchase coffee at two shillings per lb. instead of sixpence, to buy sugar at sevenpence or eightpence per lb. instead of threepence, tea at four shillings or five shillings which we could purchase at one shilling or one shilling and threepence, ale at fivepence per quart, which, were it not for the taxes and the Corn Laws, we could have for three-halfpence; bread, too, we are compelled to buy at something about double its value; the consequence of these things is that we endure hunger, and thirst, and nakedness, which it is unchristian and inhuman to make us endure; that we see our little ones looking up to us for bread and have it not to give them,—our wives waste and decay prematurely for the want of that subsistence which nature craves, that, in short, our existence, instead of being an enjoyment to us, is a load of pain and sorrow, from which even rest in the grave would be a deliverance.

And for what are we reduced to this horrible state of suffering? Is it the decree of God that we should be thus miserable, or is it the fault of men who wickedly and wantonly placed upon our shoulders the burthens which embitter our existence?

Brothers, you know the history of the "National Debt," as it is impudently called, you know that it was contracted by the Boroughmongers for the purposes of human slaughter, and with

a stupid profligacy, if possible equal even to its wickedness, you know that not only did our Boroughmongers equip and support their own troops during the French War, but they equiped and furnished all the homicides brought into the field by every Sovereign in Europe, you know that England paid them all for fighting their own battles, and mortgaged not the LAND, but the PEOPLE of England to make good this outrageous and almost incredible contract.

And brothers, are we and yourselves to be held accountable for this monstrous act? Had the Boroughmongering Aristocracy indeed a right to hand our persons over as hostages for this unrighteous debt—must we labour, and faint, and famish to pay the interest of this astounding monument of stupidity and wickedness. Had the Aristocracy a right to sell us and our children, for all coming time, to the infamous Jew plunderers? Divest yourselves of the prejudices instilled into you by a hireling press and a mistaken education, and answer us have we a right to make good any bargain the Aristocracy may please to make, no matter what it is? This, as the Frenchman says, is the real state of the question.

You are aware that the tax—amounting to £17,000,000, annually—levied on *property* during the war, was totally repealed in the second year of the peace, whilst the taxes on soap, on everything used by the poor man was left as you see them. Was it fair to leave untouched the landlords' £50,000 a year and take away two thirds of the labourers' 12s. a week?

You, Middle-classes, know that the infamous Debt was borrowed in a depreciated paper currency, and you also know that by Peel's bill, of 1819, it was made payable in standard sterling gold, adding, thereby, a full third to the property of the fundholder, to be levied off the food of the toiling, famishing millions. Are you, Middle-classes, prepared to defend this enormous swindle?

You know that the civil list of the Queen, under what is termed a retrenching Government, is heavier than that of her predecessor, or even that of the profligate George IV., Royalty at the present moment costs the country £1,200,000 a year or nearly £3,300 per day, and to this the wretch whose family famishes on 5s. a week must contribute his full share!

Look at that pink of a German dame, Adelaide—she, who did all an impudent intriguer could do, to defeat the Reform Bill and plunge the country in civil war. Look at her with

her suite of 50 "honourable" attendants and 1,000 seamen as a body guard jaunting about the coasts of the Mediterranean lest the wintry breeze of England might visit her cheek too rudely. Look at this, and then cast your eyes on the mother or wife of the virtuous artizan, he who tore the Reform Bill from her grasp, pining in a poverty-prison, and slowly famished to death on 15½d. a week, the very hair shorn off her head as a mark of degradation. Middle-classes, is this your justice? Is this the manner in which you reward your friends and requite your enemies? Is this state of things just—must it endure for ever?

And brothers—for though oppressed, degraded, and sunk below the level of humanity, we are brothers still—why should you join with the Aristocracy in perpetuating this barbarous, anti-christian, anti-human state of things? What reason have you to trample underfoot the precepts of Humanity, Reason, and Revelation, to array yourselves as the sworn defenders of luxury and oppression, and assist to famish to death millions of your fellow creatures?

Let us inquire?

Are you and your posterity not mortgaged to pay the Boroughmongers' debt? Are you not compelled to pay three times the value for everything you consume, in order that the Jew swindlers may be first satisfied, and the remainder go in places, sinecures, and pensions to an imbecile, useless, worse than worthless male and female Aristocracy?

Are you not shut out from the manly sports and recreations which once were the health and pride of Englishmen? If, after your six months' confinement in the ware or counting-house, you wish for a day's sport, over the lake or mountain, are you not told that the fish, the fowl, and the wild animal all must be preserved for my lord's use and amusement, and if you persist to assert your natural right over them are you not punished with fine and imprisonment?

Will the Aristocracy associate with you—will they endure an alliance by marriage, with what they impudently denominate your base blood? Do they not, in one word, despise and oppress you as much as they despise and oppress the working men, the only difference being that you are able, and it would appear *willing*, to bear the yoke, whilst we are unable, and, thank God, neither are we willing to bear it?

Is not the money plundered from the people and spent in

the debauch of the court, or the profligacy of the continent—is this money, we ask, not virtually abstracted from your trade and profits? Would we carry away our money to squander it on the dancers, gamesters, and prostitutes of the continental cities, or would we lay it out at home in food, clothing, and other necessary articles, to the great benefit of domestic trade and manufactures?

We entreat you, not for our sakes, but for *your own*, not for the sake of our families, but for the sake of *your own wives and children*, to take up these questions like men, and calmly and rationally discuss their truth or falsehood. Discussed they now must be either physically or morally—one way or the other—even if you are content to remain quiescent slaves you will be permitted to remain so no longer.

But then comes the bugbear—"If you, the working men, had power in your hands there would be no security for life or property."

Well, even this we have to bear in addition to our other manifold wrongs; plundered, sacrificed, starved out of existence; we are also branded as plunderers, bandits, men without conscience, men of blood. This is a bitter charge, but God is just, and he has not left us without means of proving our innocence.

In the mercantile states of America all power is in the hands of the people—their will is law; and is the manufacturers less safe in his business—the trader less secure of his property than in England? Why, the very fault of American society is the over encouragement and importance that is given to its trade.

Look, too, to Switzerland, whose laws must receive the sanction of the whole male population, assembled in arms, from 16—not 21, mark!—years of age upwards. Where is the country on the face of the earth can boast more security for life and property—more absence of crime—more positive virtues than are to be found in the mountains, vales, and cities of Switzerland. Look at the soothing tranquillity of these democratic countries, and contrast them with murderous anarchy, that even at this moment desolates Aristocratic Spain.

Dear are our families to us—dear our humble homes—our feelings are as human as your own—and if compelled to take the field in vindication of our sacred rights we shall do so with hearts yearning for our helpless families, whom many of us must never see again; to this alternative we are driven by a

dire and uncontrollable necessity—oh! add not to our wrongs by calling us "men of blood."

But blood is on the land; it falls without a record—hecatombs are yearly sacrificed to famine and a broken heart—the old, the helpless, the unresisting die, and no man writes their epitaph. Look at your bills of mortality, there you will find their tale—there will you find that deaths rise and fall—are regulated by—THE PRICE OF BREAD!!!

"But you opposed our agitation to get cheap bread." Simple men; know ye not that we do not "gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles?" We are not so foolish as to expect aught from the present House of Commons but fruits of wickedness and oppression.

"Well,"—you may perchance soliloquise,—"well, there may be much truth and justice on the side of the people, it is possible, too, that we might profit by a change, but of this we are not sure. Our houses are well furnished, our families well provided for, we would certainly wish to see the people better off, but change may possibly do us harm, and, therefore, we will have no change."

But what if the change cannot be avoided—what if a mighty, a Radical, a sweeping change MUST take place—a change which it is not in your power to avert, though it is in your power to give it a peaceful character.

"Bragadocia, this!" you exclaim—for one time you hold us cowards, at another, men of blood—"the braggart's menace! One troop of yeomanry would put thousands of you to flight!" You point to Peterloo, but you forget that even that unarmed crowd would have trampled the yeomanry under their feet in a few minutes, had not the magistrates cried out "for God's (!) sake, L'Estrange, charge, and save of the yeomanry." The Colonel did charge, the people were slaughtered, and the yeomanry "*saved*."

Even the tyrant *Times* acknowledges that "contempt of death is natural to every errand-boy in England." Brief time too has elapsed since the men of Kent gave evidence that they are the same material now as in the olden time. "Fanatics!" you exclaim. Be it so—the Roundheads of Cromwell were vulgar fanatics too, but they proved too hard for the polite Cavalier Myrmidons of Charles I.

But it is not a question of courage we are discussing now, it is one of *necessity*; watch your own child as with tears it im-

plores for a morsel—see the eye of your own wife or sister grow dim with famine—feel hunger tearing your own vitals—then hear the shot-peal calling you to death or freedom—opening to you a chance of escape from the hell you endure, and you will rush into the shock of battle with a joy bordering on madness.

And what will be the results of that strife of blood which you alone can avert? If successful, the people will look on their fallen brothers and apostrophise their mangled remains thus—"Well! you were sacrificed by the Middle-classes, they could have saved you but they would not; they assisted and encouraged the Aristocracy to murder you! Let desolation dwell in the homes that made your homes desolate!" Middle-classes! vengeance, swift and terrible, will then overtake you.

On the other hand, should the people of England be put down—supposing, for a moment, the impossibility—what then? Why, to use the words of more than one Whig journal, they will "DISPERSE IN A MILLION OF INCENDIARIES," your warehouses, your homes, will be given to the flames, and one black ruin overwhelm England!

Are you prepared for this? If you are content to be trampled and spat upon by the Aristocracy—if you have no pity for your brothers and sisters, in the humbler walks of life—if you feel not for the myriads who annually perish of cold and hunger—still ask yourselves, are you prepared to see your own homes in a blaze—your property given to the flames, and no Insurance to redeem it, yourselves, perhaps your wives and children shrieking to midnight outlaws for that mercy which in the day of your power you denied to them.

Praying that God, who endowed you with common sense and human feelings, will free your minds from prejudice and dispose you to do your duty in this terrible crisis,

We remain,

Your distressed Brethren,

THE WORKMEN OF THE TYNE.

Now it is quite true that one address of this nature might fail to awaken the Middle-classes to a perception of their impending danger, to a sense of the duty they owe to themselves and to the country; but let every large town issue an address—to disperse, in rapid succession, over the whole island, and a mighty moral inroad would be rapidly made into the ranks of the Middle-classes.

In addition to this, let the Middle-classes be invited to attend public meetings, and in a friendly spirit discuss the points at issue. If they came to the discussion the best results would follow, and the greatest forbearance and even respect ought to be shown them; if they refused they would be only put still more in the wrong. In the present state of the question I maintain that the working-men have no right to condemn them, because, like the wretches who crucified the Redeemer, "they know not what they do."

Similar addresses to the foregoing might be presented to the Soldiers, the Sailors, the landed Aristocracy, and the Clergy, for even among the latter class some religious and patriotic men might be found—at all events the duty is not done unless all classes be solemnly and repeatedly appealed to.

I need hardly say that all violent expressions had much better be avoided; though in perfect accordance with the excited feelings of public meetings—though of all things, perhaps, the best calculated to secure the orator his meed of applause, yet are they calculated to produce a re-action in the mind in its moments of repose. In all cases the expression of a quiet, dignified determination, would be more worthy of the cause, as well as more likely to produce its success.

I shall now proceed to point out what I conceive ought to be the constitution, regulations, and duties of Political Unions. This subject is one of incalculable importance. Indeed upon the efficency of the Political Unions the success or defeat of the "Movement" mainly depends.

Every important town, central of a district, ought to form the nucleus of the Union; deputations from this union should, after due notice given, visit every village within the sphere of its action, at such place and hour as would be most favourable for getting the people togther in considerable numbers. If these deputations acquit themselves with ability, they will find a ready disposition on the part of the people to form an auxiliary branch of the union. Rules, book of enrolment, tickets, &c., will, of course, be prepared by the central union. Every village factory or hamlet—in short, "wherever a man is found," there will be found a few active spirits ready to take upon them the functions of officers; a local council must be formed, chosen by the local members immediately after their enrolment, a secretary and treasurer elected by the council, and nothing remains but proceed to business—hold weekly and monthly

meetings, and labour to extend the usefulness and efficiency of the Union.

Every outbranch thus constituted must have the privilege of electing two delegates to the general council. One of these resident in the central town or head quarters of the union, this delegate to attend at every weekly meeting of the general council, and report to his constituents any business of interest that may happen to be transacted.

The other delegate ought to be chosen from the local branch itself, and should attend once a month at the meetings of the general council, bringing with him a report of the numbers united in his district, the nature of their pursuits, the intensity or moderation of their political feelings, and—their subscriptions to the general fund. Let the outbranches, say forty in number, be divided into four divisions, No. 1, No. 2, No. 3, and No. 4. Let the representatives of each division attend the central meetings once a month, varying the attendance so as to have some one of the divisions represented at every weekly meeting of the central council.

Let each branch hold its monthly meeting a night or two before its delegate is to attend at head quarters. This monthly meeting ought to be emphatically one of agitation, and the central council would do well to assist it by sending out one or two public speakers.

One of the most important duties of the union is to adopt a wholesome and efficient system of collecting the funds—this done effectually, a life, and vigour, and dignity, is infused into the whole organization—this neglected, you engender feebleness, disorganization, and decay.

By raising the contributions as frequently as possible, and in the smallest possible sums, two great advantages are obtained. First, the payment is so small as to be almost totally unfelt; secondly, the member has the subject frequently forced upon his attention, and is, thereby, less liable to lose sight of his political duties in attending to the more pressing and immediate business of earning his daily bread.

I believe it would be found extremely advantageous, therefore, to collect the subscriptions weekly, at a halfpenny per week, for each member. For this purpose let every local branch appoint four collectors, to go out of office monthly. Let a spirit of emulation be especially promoted in this very important office; for instance, should one of these collectors

succeed in obtaining the weekly halfpence from all the members, and another collector not succeed so fully, a little good humoured raillery as to business habits, cleverness, &c., would produce a most salutary vigilance in the discharge of the duty. Those who might be absent from the weekly meetings should be waited upon at home by the collector, with a "You know my character for business habits is at stake, I will not be written down an Incapable—in short, you must give me the halfpenny!"

This system acted upon, there would be few defaulters; but if any member should pertinaciously refuse to pay, let his name be read out at the monthly meeting as in arrear—three months' arrear, without a satisfactory explanation, to forfeit membership. As the duty of a collector would be laborious, every member ought to discharge it in his turn.

A Union comprising 5000 or 6000 members would, under proper discipline and management, turn in a sum of £40. or £50. per month, whatever proceeding, or agitation, therefore, that might be deemed necessary for promoting the cause, could be entered upon, free from that crippling, paralyzing influence ever attendant on a paucity of funds.

A profitable disposal of the funds is a matter of not less importance than even the collection, and it cannot be entrusted to better hands than the General Council at its weekly meetings. Though local circumstances and passing events will, of course, enter largely into the deliberation of the Council, and exercise much influence over a wholesome expenditure, yet a few general hints may be here thrown out for general application.

I do not believe that holding frequent meetings, in any given district, is sufficient to rouse the people of that district to a sense of their wrongs, and a determination to put an end to them. Such meetings will be attended in succession, chiefly by those who approve of the principles of liberty, whilst those who most require instruction will decline, through prejudice, to attend the meetings at all.

This hostility or apathy of any portion of the People is a great evil, but I believe it may be successfully attacked by the tract system—that system will at least be found a powerful auxiliary to public meetings.

Let every centre, therefore, or head-quarters of a Union carry on a manufacture of tracts. Brief, simple, and perspi-

cuous let them be, embodying the facts of the hideous system. Once fully in possession of the facts the common sense of the People will furnish the commentary.

SPECIMEN OF TRACTS.

ORIGIN OF THE ARISTOCRACY.

——"Your ancient, but ignoble blood,
Has crept through scoundrels ever since the flood."—Pope.

In the earliest days of English civilization, that is to say, under the mild and just laws of the Saxons, almost the entire soil was held in their own right, by "allodial proprietors." Each of those proprietors had a reasonable farm, cultivated it himself, and enjoyed the fruits of his industry. Even in those times the injustice and rapacity which since has made earth a hell began to make its appearance. Freebooters arose, who contrived to live by plunder; these associated together in bands of half-a-dozen and upwards, built themselves fortified dwellings, from whence they issued—mounted on horseback and cased in mail; forayed (plundered) the open country by night or by day, as best suited their purposes. The peaceful cultivators, in order to avert the destruction of their crops, and loss of their flocks and herds, agreed first, to pay the Freebooting Chief a sum yearly for his forbearance and protection. Next, the Freebooter assumed ownership of the soil, and compelled the real owner to hold it by tenure, under him, as a tenant. This ruffian encroachment went on with an injustice proportionate to the rapacity of the Chief, and when the tenant died he seized upon the whole property and would not return it to his family till a large sum called "relief" was paid him. Next, the Chief assumed the right of forbidding the marriage of the female heir, and shortly after, the right of selling her in marriage. Step after step the liberty and life, as well as the property of the unfortunate tenant, were seized upon by the Robber Chief—he was

not permitted to move from the soil—he was sold with it as a part of the fixtures of the estate—he was murdered at the caprice of the oppressors, who, by this time, were changed into two or three grades of barons and inferior gentry. The tenants of the Baron were hanged on a four-legged machine, whilst those of the Inferior Gentry were less honourably butchered on a three, or even a two-legged apparatus. When the Norman plunderers settled in the country they tortured men and women by hanging them by a chain and roasting them over a slow fire, in order to discover hidden treasure, &c. Christianity first broke this dreadful bondage; through the active zeal of the church Serfage was abolished in Great Britain, and an asylum provided for the destitute in the religious establishments.

Should any honourable aristocrat cavil at the coat of arms I have here made out for him, let him consult "*Hallam's Middle Ages*," where he will find the noble pedigree laid down at full.

THE NATIONAL DEBT.

"Truths, which you will not read in the Gazettes,
But which 'tis time to teach the hireling bribe
That fatten on their country's gore and debts."—BYRON.

THIS tremendous monument of fraud and murder was commenced about 150 years ago, in the reign of William III. It was of small amount, however, up till the breaking out of the American War of Independence, in 1776. It may be as well to state that this ruinous and unnatural war was entered upon in order to compel the Americans to submit to be taxed by the Aristocracy of this country. Teas were sent out with a tax of 3d. per lb. laid upon them by the British Boroughmongers.

The Americans manfully refused to submit to the imposition, and a bloody war ensued, to support which the Aristocracy borrowed £200,000,000., about the half of this sum was squandered in doing the work of slaughter on our American brothers, the other half was shared by the Boroughmongers among themselves at home.—Scarcely had this atrocious war ended—in the complete discomfiture of the heartless tyrants who commenced it,—when the revolution broke out in France. It was perfectly natural that the British Aristocracy should set to, heart and soul, to quench the flame of liberty in France, but it would not be easy to account for the fact that not only did they hire and send out their own full quota of human butchers, but they—the British Boroughmongering Aristocracy with a mad King and a profligate idiot Regent at their head—actually supported ALL the troops brought against French liberty by all the combined despots of Europe. This amazing and incredible piece of stupidity as well as wickedness will be doubted when it has become matter of remote history; but should the uninformed of the present generation have any doubts upon the subject, the following terse little doccument will at once settle the question :—

LORD WELLINGTON TO GENERAL ALTEN.

Bruxelles, May 16th, 1815.

"Great Britain pays to Hanover, for the service of 15,000 men in this country, at the rate of nearly £40. per man per annum: whereas she is now subsidizing all Europe at the rate of £11. per man per annum. The Hanoverian troops thus subsidized are fed for nothing, and claim every thing for nothing: whereas, by a recent arrangement made a Vienna, the troops of all other nations pay something for their subsistence. The Hanoverian troops are Landwehr, half officered in proportion to their numbers, and we have lately been obliged to give them officers in the British service to do duty with their corps; the troops of all other nations are fully officered, and are troops of the line.

"I do not complain; I am perfectly satisfied with the Hanoverian troops; but I should wish you to consider the circumstances above recited, which are strictly true, and you will see whether the Hanoverian government have any reason to complain.

"In fact, including their provisions, the Hanoverian troops now cost the British government between five and six times as much as any other troops in the world.

"WELLINGTON."

HISTORY OF POOR LAWS.

"The land is mine, saith the Lord; and ye are strangers and sojourners with me."—Leviticus, chap. xxv v. 23.

At the period when serfage was abolished by the pious and patriotic labours of the clergy, a third of the tithes were set apart for the use of the poor. All monasteries and religious establishments were opened for the reception of the houseless and destitute; in fact, all the poor of England were supported out of the revenues of the church, up till the time of the Reformation. Then it was that Henry and his favourites seized upon the entire possessions of the Chnrch turning thousands upon thousands out to perish. The old, the diseased, and the infirm died, and no man told their tale, but the young and vigorous were not so easily starved out of existence, the face of the country was covered with "Sturdy Beggars," and the wealthy Citizen or pampered Aristocract could hardly move out without meeting one at every turn of the road. These Sturdy Beggars would have relief, either by fair means or foul. In vain did the King and the Parliament scourge, brand, and murder those wretched men on the gallows. The resistance to Henry's "Poor Law Amendment Act" (for such it was) continued. Thousands of the poor "Sturdy Beggars" were murdered, but hundreds of the legal plunderers fell in retaliation. The bonds of society fell assunder. There was no safety, and there could be none for life or property Thus it went on through the latter part of Henry's reign and the whole reign of Edward VI. In the reign of Elizabeth the plunderers had learned, by bitter experience, that men were not to be quietly starved to death, that if they were to die themselves, others would die, along with them. Hence the famous 43rd of Elizabeth, the Old Poor Law of England, which continued in force for nearly 300 years. The Whigs, however, have re-enacted the part of Henry VIII.—they have passed their "Poor Law Amendment Act," they have confiscated the poor man's right to his pittance out of the soil, and decreed that

the rich man shall have all. In doing all this they have did no more than Henry attempted before them, and it remains to be seen whether the intelligent millions of the 19th century will be more easily famished out of existence than the "Sturdy Beggars" of the 16th.

TREASON OF THE NEW POOR LAW.

LORD Abingdon says, that "the first power in a state is the People, the second the Constitution, and the third the law." Locke tell us that the Legislature is empowered to make LAWS—*not* LEGISLATORS, and that the Executive must govern by *fixed laws*, NOT TO BE VARIED in particular cases."—Now, the present Government, and corrupt Legislature, of England have actually transferred the power of *making* laws, and *varying them in cases of life and death*, to the Poor Law Commissioners. It is clear from the above authorities, and indeed from the anthority of common sense, that the power delegated to the Commissioners is a bastard power, not begotten of the Constitution, and that the Legislature which granted it is guilty of High Treason! The highest treason, says Lord Somers, is that committed against the Constitution. The people, however, can neither vindicate their own liberties nor preserve the Constitution till they first take their natural place in the government of the country.—Up, then Up. Hurrah for Universal Suffrage!

WORKING OF THE NEW POOR LAW.

The Hartismere gruel recipe for ninety seven breakfasts :—"To a pint and a half of groats add two or three handfulls of salt, throw these ingredients into as much water as will give a pint and a half to each man and woman, and a pint to each child under sixteen years of age, and an economical beverage is produced." This is the Union where poor Aldridge, a pauper afflicted with the evil, devoured the poultice that was put to his sores, and another named Thrower ate potato peelings out of the gutter. And this, too, whilst the Russell family are wallowing in the immense rentals of the Bedford Estates, every furrow of which belongs to the Poor of England!

In the Wilney Union, Oxfordshire, the silent system is enforced. The husband, wife, and children are separated, and are never permitted an interview except at meal times, when, if they attempt to speak to each other, they are "tied up," that is, they have one leg tied up, and are obliged to rest on the other for half an hour.

"I am of opinion that 15½d. per week is sufficient to support an inmate of the Workhouse," says the Poor Law Commissioner. I think, says the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that the Queen Dowager, of Rotten-Borough-notoriety ought, to have £100,000 a year, and a first rate Man of War for her pleasure boat. Both propositions agreed to by our honourable Representatives.

"Whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder."—DIVINE REVELATION. "This is your ward," says the Poor Law Official to the aged female pauper, "and your's, is on the other side of the prison," he says, turning to her miserable husband, "no faultering, you must part." And they are in their imprisonment and starvation refused even the cheep consolation of each other's society. Let us now look to Blackstone for the Commentary on this heartless ordinance. "Upon the law of Nature and Revelation depends all human laws, and if any human law should command us to commit moral guilt, we are bound to TRANSGRESS THAT LAW." The most effectual way to "transgress" this law is to raze it from the statute book. Hurrah, then, for Universal Suffrage!

FRUITS OF THE NEW POOR LAW.

At the commission for inquiry into the state of hand-loom weavers, held in Carlisle, in July, 1838, a committee appointed for the purpose drew out a table of the average wages, exclusive of loom rent and other dues, the average amounted to 2s. 4½d. per week! Craigson and Chambers produced an average of the earnings of men in their employ, which turned up a sum of 1s. 7½d. per week only, and the averages of Ferguson and Co.'s workmen, made out at the same time, amounted to no more than 1s. 11½d. per week! Yet a full half of this wretched pittance is torn from these unhappy men in order to swell the landlords' rental to double its natural value, and pay the interest of the blood-stained Borough-monger-Debt—in order that Davies may have £938. a year pension for helping to bolus old royalty on its death-bed, and that his moral Majesty of Hanover may have £22,000. a year of British gold to assist him in cutting the throat of the Hanoverian Constitution. Is christianity and justice dead—will not Englishmen, of every class, rise at once and put an end to such a fiendish state of things. Poor Hardy, of Manchester, struggled to sustain life in his wife and family on 2s. 6d. a week. The wife on her oath stated that death itself was not as terrible to her as to go into the Bastile and lose the society of her husband and little ones. Her children died, it is true, but then the object of the Poor Law framers was completely answered. Let the relief be rendered sufficiently terrible, and the working people, rather than fall back upon it, will submit to work for famine wages. A reduction of 3s. a week on the wages of the productives of England amounts to 40 or 50 millions sterling a year. This was the prize for which the capitalists and oligarchy contended, and not the three or four millions which was most they could ever save by a reduction of the rates. This prize the corruptionists have laid their hands upon, but in doing so they over-reached themselves, and gave the signal for the people to rouse them from the sleep of ages. Oh, Englishmen, now is the season of hope.

"Awake! arise! or be for ever fallen."

THE CORN LAWS.

Of all the manifold evils under which the People groan, though the Poor Law Confiscation may be the most attrocious and sinful, the Corn Laws are perhaps the most extensively injurious to society at large. The direct effects of these laws is to put the toiling People upon half allowance of bread, in order that the rental of the landlords may amount to double the natural value of his land. When the artizan has toiled for his weekly pittance the continental grower offers him wheat for 30s. a quarter, but the Legislature steps in and says "No; you must buy your wheat from the landlord, and pay him 60s. The artizan, and his poor wife and family are starved, but the landlord receive £100,000. a year instead of £50,000. Why is this done?—Simply because the landlords happen to be the Legislators. Toil! toil! says the landlord, and when you have received your pittance I must be paid one shilling before you are permitted to lay out another shilling in bread.

This law is a virtual and practical revival of the Serfage of the middle ages. It argues that as you are born and reared on the soil the landlord has a property in your person, and his "serfage tax" must be satisfied before you are permitted to touch a morsel of food. Byron says:—

> ——————"We know
> With what set gilded terms a tyrant juggles."

But what are the terms by which this tax of infamy is juggled from us—what is the gilding which is put upon this pill of bitter slavery? Why, we are told that it is rendered necessary by the existence of the National Debt. Now, as it is notorious that the Boroughmongering landowners contracted the debt themselves, and contracted it, too, for the purpose of destroying liberty in America and France. Justice and common sense would demand that a heavy tax should be laid on the estates, so that the landlords might be compelled to bear a portion at least of the burthens they brought upon the country. Instead of this, however, the working man is

burthened with almost the whole indirect taxation, and not content with perpetrating this piece of injustice the landlord tells him that a portion of the taxes falls upon the soil, in the shape of the coffee and ale (very little of either) consumed by the agricultural labourer, and the extra price paid for the harness of the plough-horse, in consequence of the taxes falling on the harness maker. "These expenses," says the landlord, "fall on the soil, I am not able to afford it, and you will have to pay me double price for your bread to keep me safe."

But the best of the joke is to follow; the Corn Laws, though established for the ostensible purpose to save the landlord from the small fraction of taxes beforementioned which fall on the land, these Corn Laws, I say, bring more into the landlord's pocket than the WHOLE TAXATION of the country. A few days ago a Tory Lord stated, as a defence for the Corn Laws, that "they enhanced the value of lands by at least one third; that the land rental of Great Britain was £180,000,000 odd, and that to abolish the Corn Laws would deprive the landlords of £60,000,000 a year." Thus, according to their own showing, in order to assist them to bear three or four millions that fall indirectly on the land, they take from the country a sum much greater than the whole national revenue.

ADULTERATION OF PROVISIONS.

NOT long since a merchant of Hull was fined £10,000 for mixing up a third of plaster of Paris, ground bones, &c., with a large quantity of flour, this admixture, taken into the stomach, is calculated to produce a certain and lingering death. A tea merchant was recently fined in £5,000 for adulterating tea, which he readily paid, observing he had made £100,000 in the business. Adulteration of this kind is practised to a fearful extent on almost every article we use, and this crying-to-Heaven iniquity is one of the unhappy consequences of the present system.

Every penny of tax charged on any article is a penny of premium to the adulterator. When the taxes are abrogated, this premium will cease and determine, and the evil could soon be got rid of altogether by an honest legislature making it what it ought to be—a transportable offence. If we would preserve ourselves from being poisoned, as well as famished, let us put an end to the present state of things. The man who tamely submits to be a slave, deserves to endure all the evils of slavery.

TYRANNY IN CANADA.

When the United States revolted, Canada, chiefly peopled by French Emigrants, remained loyal to British connexion. For this England gave them a constitution resembling the British, believing, doubtless, that, as the British constitution answered all the purposes of plundering the people of England, a similar constitution would produce similar effects in Canada. In this, however, our Oligarchy was disappointed, the "House of Assembly," unlike our "House of Commons," refused to become the tools of the Colonial Government, they insisted upon redress of grievances; upon putting an end to the shameless plundering and rapacity of the noble sprigs which we sent out to rule over them. It was not the custom of our lordlings to listen to complaiuts of this kind, they refused all redress, and—the Canadian Commons refused the Supplies. All means of corruption and intimidation were then resorted to by the Governments both here and in Canada. The House of Assembly was repeatedly dissolved and re-elected, hoping even to weary out the people. But in vain—true to themselves the people returned honest representatives, who would not vote the Supplies till justice was done. The Judges, the Governors, Sub-Governors, and all the Aristocratic spawn we sent among them went without their salaries. Not long, however, for as soon as the Constitutional Commons of England found that art and treachery could not nullify the constitution of Ca-

nada they resorted to open force, passed "Resolutions" empowering the British Governor to break open the Treasury and seize upon its contents. Thus fell the Constitution of Canada; thus commenced the legal and constitutional resistance of the Canadian people; and thus, was the signal given for carrying flame and desolation into the homes of a virtuous, peaceful, and constitutionally obedient people. Men of England, would you put an end for ever to such villainy? If you would hurl down the blood-stained Oligarchs and take the position of men in the government of your own country.

A CONTRAST.—BRITISH JUSTICE.

One fine morning (I believe in December last) a party of Canadian Patriots stumbled upon a company of British honourables—Mr. Ellice, M.P., Mr Brown, their families, and attendants—a sharp firing took place before the honourables were captured, but captured they were. The Patriots removed them towards their head-quarters, treated them kindly, entertained them well, and when they found that they could not conveniently keep prisoners of war they dismissed them, safe and sound, without depriving them of even a particle of property. This was the conduct of the Patriots. Now turn we to Kingston, Montreal, Toronto, London, &c., &c., and behold the very men who acted thus humanely to their prisoners brought out upon the scaffold—butchered, denied even the death of a soldier, but hung like dogs, and their poor remains refused to the intreaties of their heart-broken wives and mothers! This is what our foul Aristocracy calls "British justice." Oh! why should the industrious trading classes of England lend themselves to support that foul Aristocracy?

A SPECIMEN OF OUR "FOREIGN POLICY.

Great Britain conquered Java in 1811. This island contains six millions of a population, and is extremely fertile in coffee, sugar, and other tropical produce. Well, our Collective Wisdom ceded this island to the Dutch, in consideration of one of their princes marrying our Princess Charlotte. This negociation was carried on in a manner so slovenly that, after the transaction had been concluded, three despatches relating to it were found in the Foreign Office, with the seals unbroken. Our Aristocratic rulers were too busy indulging in their sensual pleasures to attend much to negociation; it is not, therefore, very clearly defined upon what terms our trade was in future to be carried on with Java. The impression was that our goods were to be admitted free, whilst those of other countries were taxed at the discretion of the Dutch government. The Dutch, however, quickly laid on a duty of £2. per cent. on all foreign goods, and, knowing the patrician dunces they had to deal with, actually laid double that amount on British goods. Our Imbeciles remonstrated, but were sneered at by the Dutch, till in 1824, England took an "imposing attitude," and him of the dykes and sluices agreed to let our produce into Java free of duty. This agreement too was broken, and a shilling's worth of our goods never entered Java duty free since the day we flung it away on the Dutch prince. At the present moment the duty on British goods entering Java is 30 to 40 per cent. Well may the Middle-classes be in love with the dominion of a feudal Aristocracy, as stupid and ignorant as they are dishonest, blood-thirsty, and tyrannical.

MONOPOLY ON SUGAR, COFFEE, &c.

Since sugar has been manufactured from beet root half the sugar consumed in France is of home growth. There is not a farm in Great Britain but could be turned

into a Sugar Plantation, affording healthful employment for a very large portion of the population. This, however, the Legislature will not permit, for the following substantial reasons:—First, the West India planters have a monopoly of the sugar market, and we are compelled to pay these worthies 14s. to 16s. per cwt. more for their sugar than we could purchase it for from the foreign grower. The sum thus plundered from the working people in the price of their sugar is computed, even by the Whig *Sun*, at £4,000,000. sterling *a year!* This does not go to the taxes, but simply *out* of the pockets of the People and *into* the pockets of the Slave-driver. That is reason the first. The second reason is, that 25s. per cwt. is levied on all sugars as a tax to the government, and which tax the government—having £100,000. a year to pay the Queen Dowager—having £1,200,000. to pay the Queen herself—having places, pensions, and sinecures, without number, to keep up, and £30,000,000. a year to pay as interest of the Jew debt—this sugar tax, I say, our profligate Government cannot afford to do without, and therefore this mine of national wealth is shut up from the people. Exactly similar is the monopoly of treacle, an article which we could buy from the foreigner for 8s. 6d. per cwt., but which we are compelled to pay 31s. for, the difference being divided between the Government in *tax* and the planter in *monopoly*. Coffee is still worse. This article we could buy for 3d. to 5d. per lb., from the foreigner, delivered on the Thames, yet we are compelled to pay for it 18d. to 2s. per lb., the difference being divided between the planter and the Government, most of it falling to the planter's share. If the people of England suffer these things, once they become generally known, why, all I can say is that they *deserve* to suffer them.

COMMON LANDS.

"Those fenceless fields, the sons of wealth divide,
And even the bare-worn common is denied"—GOLDSMITH.

IMMEDIATELY after the conquest and expulsion of the Danes by the immortal Alfred, that wise prince saw that the best safeguard of a nation was a contented and military People. He, therefore, apportioned off about ten million of acres for the use of the common people, serving them at once for grazing the domestic animals, hunting, practising the manly sports, military exercise, &c. This property, even through the confiscations of the Norman Invader, the spoliations of Henry VIII, the "unsettlings" of Cromwell, William III., &c., still escaped the hand of the spoiler, and remained up till the reign of George I. the inviolate property of the Commons of England. Why dwell on the disgusting sequel, eight millions of acres have already been plundered from the people by means of "Enclosure Bills" passed through the vile Legislature, and these eight millions of acres go now to swell the rental of our bloated, unnatural, anti-christian Aristocracy.

DOINGS OF THE ARISTOCRACY IN OUR POSSESSIONS ABROAD.

THE following statement is made by Mr. Thompson, the powerful anti-slavery lecturer, and no feeble stickler for the continuance of slavery in the British Isles. "In the east we have done comparatively nothing to better the condition of the People, but have taxed them till, able to bear up no longer, they are leaving the land uncultivated. The land has been taken from the natives, their produce taxed often with more than it will yield, and we even tax them for performing their native worship. It is the finest country in the world, and yet the people are starving through the Company's rapacity. Robbery,

murder, and suicide covers a land marked out by nature for perhaps the happiest in the world." Such is Mr. Thompson's picture of the doings of our talon'd Aristocracy abroad. Englishmen, will you basely submit to slavery yourselves, and allow the fruits of that base submission to embitter the lives of myriads of human beings who inhabit the vast countries subject to our sway.

THE POST OFFICE.

"Speed the swift intercourse, from soul to soul,
And waft a thought from Indus to the Pole.—Pope.

This establishment is of a piece with the rest of the hideous system. The Peers; the Commoners (so called); the officials and hangers-on of the Government, all can send their letters FREE throught the Post Office, whilst the tax is so heavy upon the People as to amount to an absolute prohibition in the case of the working classes. On the two last weeks of January, 1839, no less than 258,231 franked letters passed through the London Post Office alone, these all passed FREE for the convenience of those who enjoy £2,000. to £200,000. a year, whilst the poor mechanic is not permitted to communicate with his distant friends except at the sacrifice of a day's subsistence. His feelings are desolated, seared up, and sacrificed on the shrine of the most monstrous and dishonest system that ever God in his wrath permitted to afflict a People.

Tracts like these, might be multiplied *ad infinitum*—they might be scattered over the whole country through the agency of the Political Unions; and whilst the Unions disseminated these "Agitators" from within, they would re-act and support the Unions from without. Truly may it be said of the SYSTEM that it is

——— "A monster of such frightful mein,
As to be hated needs but to be seen."

and what means so good for making, it seen as to hang up its horrid features in nearly every cottage, workshop, and inhabited house in the kingdom.

True, this cannot be done without much activity and exertion on the part of the people, but that activity will not be wanting. There is not, in England, one locality unblessed with some active spirits—those spirits will infuse activity into the mass around them—indeed we cannot calculate upon any patriotic movement being made, without first assuming that, an *active* patriotism resides in the People.

ARMING.

The subject of Arming is one of vital importance. "Where the Government only is armed," says one of our highest constitutional authorities—"There despotism is established." At present nothing is to be seen but the greatest activity in our several garrisons. Practising with the mortar and the rocket—with the bullet and the bayonet, as who should say, "If we cannot govern you by fair means, and with your consent, we have other means in preparation, which we will bring to bear upon you." Now this amounts to a Military Despotism—nothing short of it; and unless the people are in a position to set that despotism aside, their petitions will not be listened to by an Aristocracy emphatically unjust, and essentially warlike. The middle classes may see the justice of our claims, it is their *interest* to do so; but the Aristocracy never will see it, it is their interest to oppress and plunder the people.

It is, therefore, indispensable to the success of the present "movement," that the people take an "imposing attitude." Thank God, the Constitution guarantees to them the right to do so—that right must not be allowed to slumber. If the people march a well-appointed force against the stronghold of corruption, it may capitulate on reasonable terms—if, on the contrary, they march against it a naked multitude, the Warders from the battlements will mock at their summons, and pour destruc- on their ranks. It is necessary, therefore, that the people be armed—whatever cost or inconvenience that arming may put them to, such cost and inconvenience will be largely rewarded in the certain triumph of Political Equality.

Certain edicts, of the old despotic dotard George III, prohibit Englishmen from arming in bodies—what is worse, it prohibits them from practising military training and discipline. The first difficulty is easily got over by men arming individually, the second obstacle is not so easily surmounted. A day or two of actual revolt—when, of course, such edicts will be despised—may, however, give the people a good notion of presenting a level front to the enemy, and using their limbs and weapons in concert. I do not pretend to any practical knowledge of these matters, but I believe that under all, or any, circumstances, the following suggestion may be turned to good account:—

I find that Colonel Macerone states in his defensive instructions to the people, that a piece of wood resembling a butcher's tray, and covered with sheet-iron, will turn a musket ball. I have no reason to doubt the Colonel's statement—though the rapidity with which I am compelled to write, prevents me from testing it just now, by actual experiment. If the statement be correct, I can easily imagine a machine constructed on the principle of the horseman's Curiass, to cover the vital parts in *front*, and to fasten with a lacing round the back and over the shoulders. This apparatus would defend, from musketry and grape—it would be impenetrable to the bayonet—it would keep men's faces for ever to the enemy, and inspire a confidence perfectly irresistible—whilst it would hardly outweigh a soldier's coat and knapsack. A light pike, or sword, and brace of pistols, slung in a belt, would complete the equipment.

This Half-cuirass would more than counterbalance the discipline of the best troops that ever mechanised under the orders of the Martinet. In discipline, and not in stamina or courage, rests the superiority of mercenaries. Give the people an advantage that will neutralize that superiority and you at once decide the contest.

To me it appears that wherever the manufacture of the Curiass is understood, the manufacture of this Half-Curiass may be profitably established. Men will purchase defences to preserve life much more naturally, and therefore readily, than they will purchase offensive weapons to destroy it. Should the Half Curiass be found to suit its purpose, I make no doubt but Birmingham or Sheffield will take the hint.

Whilst I write a squadron of Dragoons defile past my window. Against a charge of these customers, the Foot Curiassiers must oppose their serried grove of levelled pikes, and pour